

Task Force on Emergency Preparedness
Wednesday, June 27, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
Room 1A

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Around the Room Introductions: Rosalie Diaz, Lina Sizmin, Michael Gonzales, Councilor French, Linda Parashos, Willie Chambers, Councilor Hinton, Vernon Poe, Jim Masog, Dean Derek, Kelle Landavazo, Carol Rulla, Sue Ruonala, Brent Orn, Terrie Stetzer, Councilor Gladfelter.

Brent Orn motioned to approve minutes. Jim Masog second the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Testimony

Sue Ruonala spoke about the situation last year, with the wild fire that jumped to Corbett, and was very close to Gresham. Smoke was so bad, it was as if fire was in our backyard. Then, Corbett was said to be evacuating. No information was on the City's website or on NextDoor.com. Many neighbors were worried about pets and wondering what to do with chickens as well. There was a lot of panic in the neighborhood, and there was no information for Gresham. This is about neighborhood ready and felt like this situation did not meet that.

Presentation and Task Force Business

This meeting is about best practices, in two parts: communication and capacity building. (See PowerPoint for detailed information on presentation).

Do1 Thing Campaign is one communication/outreach campaign. It is a web-based campaign, with a clear website. (This presentation will be on the City's website). The site incorporates some short videos as well, which is also available in other languages. It is concise, and easy to manage.

SF72 is another campaign. This one is much different; its more about people. It talks about getting connected through social network, storytelling, and includes videos.

How do they connect with people who are not connected? This is all about digital inclusion. It makes assumption that this is how people are going to connect.

Another training and course available is CERT/NET (Portland). It's an 8 week national program, that requires a background check, but at the end you become a deployable resource for the City. This is like our CVIPs program, which is the City's equivalent.

Seattle's SNAP (Seattle's Neighborhood Actively Prepare) program is flexible to meet needs of neighborhoods. There is an online toolkit that provides practical step-by-step instructions on organizing as a neighborhood.

This brings us to us, and our programs: Neighborhood Ready. This is how we address our neighborhood preparedness efforts. It is our crime prevention program. It incorporates disaster preparedness. It encourages using Nextdoor as an organizing tool. This program is all under review at the moment.

The City of Gresham has won a national award for Neighborhood Ready, which Gresham has created. In the past, we had installed signs, but a shift had to be made on how we do this. This program is not supported the way it had been prior, due to less staff.

What works for effective messaging? Surveys were done and came up with effective messaging data that includes: info overload, no long lists or to-do's, story telling, and trusted agents.

The challenge is finding an environment to make it exciting and personal. It's about a bigger concept.

Effective capacity building data include leverage existing efforts, engaging community leaders, funding for projects, flexibility to meet needs, plan for sustained effort. We need to be more efficient in our approach. We should be able to think outside the box, partnering with other events.

Task Force Work Session

Councilor Hinton suggests starting with having a mission statement or a goal for the task force. Maybe a place to start would be something like: "To help prepare Gresham citizens to effectively respond to a major disruption either to their personal lives or to the greater community at large".

The understanding from the last meeting, is that this task force is tasked on a way to get the word out to the community, rather than a plan. There's so much information out there already, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We're missing the motivator to get people to go there. What is that – is that a campaign? Is it just basic neighborhood work? Is there a strategy that will make people go get all that information that we know that is out there.

There was some talk last time about breaking it down into individual or family. That is one tier; and within that tier that are different economic elements. There are some people who can have 2 years' of everything, but most cannot. So how do we define programs for all, and those who don't have the opportunity or economic ability, what can they do, to participate in some level.

Then we go to the next level, to neighborhoods. Then we have state, and county. We should break it down, and hit each topic methodically. Language, communication, all those things have a lot to do with how we communicate this information and make sure its effective. Our job isn't to entertain the world; our job is to provide this to our citizens, whether they take it or not, it's up to them.

If you're going to try and reach out to people, we should identify specifically what areas we want them to start at. In addition to that, identify superficially the message we want to start with, and encourage them to go further. Maybe we can have the City liaisons help word smith the mission statement.

From the first meeting, we had gleaned these objectives. These were: to encourage community ownership of preparedness through effective communication, to identify and make divisions for vulnerable communities, and to build capability and capacity in the community.

Maybe we should just focus on messaging and what we want them to do and strategies to achieve that. If you think that is where our focus should really lie. We have a need to convince people that they need to do something. We want them to know if you want to evacuate chickens, a dog crate will work.

How do we communicate with these different levels – there are individuals and families. Maybe the first component to all of these is communication. We have issues about having 70 languages. Maybe part of this is to start communication with the school district. Then we have the website, in case natural disasters - HAM radios. There are all sorts of levels of communication, maybe that's a place to start.

Part of a concern about communication is some people do not want to get involved. Some neighborhoods may not have school kids; could be older or retired people who don't even know their neighbors. Sometimes you won't be able to convince everybody. Hopefully we can have an underlining fabric of understanding though with most people.

We have a program we are just rolling out now called Neighbors Helping Neighbors, where someone may have a need for assistance. A lot of these right now are code violations, but that can be a sign that neighbors may need help. Block party trailers will be talked about more next meeting, but is also another resource that can be helpful.

Are there people in the city that are available to go to schools, HOAs or other areas to give presentations? All the apartment complexes have managers that manage them, and have meetings. That is not a resource we have available, maybe it is something that can be recommended. There are also other resources like faith based, that would be happy to help make those presentations. Also, fire and police groups like Fire Corps and CVIPs. Building volunteer capacity is a great strategy.

Culturally, some groups may be immigrants and they may not be receptive, unless having a personal relationship with the City or liaisons. We need to show them that we want to be there not as City but as neighbors. It's a matter of inclusion that makes them feel unbiased based on race, color, ethnicity, etc.

Rockwood Rising could be a conduit to connecting to the rest of the industries, and having community liaisons within the food cultures. Maybe using the younger generation to filter up to the parents or grandparents.

Maybe next year doing something for the arts festival as a platform with many people. Or if there is an event going on like SW picnic, a few weeks before, like do an outreach campaign to help get more people to come to the event.

Does this taskforce want to develop the strategies, or are we saying the City should have a strategy to do that, and then list the recommendations? Trying not to go all over the place with the recommendations. I don't think the committee should give the details. Committee should just give the overview. So, methods to accomplish that mission, like working with the school districts, Neighbors Helping Neighbors program, possibly developing Volunteer Cadre to deliver preparedness presentations.

Maybe do a neighborhood campaign then pass it along to other neighborhoods to use. Carol, President of Coalition, suggested thinking about partnering and ways to make good use of existing programs and resources, like LandLord Forum, have landlords get a break, and having preparedness be a part of that. Also GREAT Business forum; if they can get a break on insurance, this might get more interest. It's getting down to the neighborhood level that is more of the challenge.

Going back to suggestions when it comes to neighborhoods, to smart small, Linda, President of North Gresham agrees. The Neighborhood NNO event (maybe not this year but next year) would be a great starting point. Then see what develops, go back to access it, see what works and what didn't.

We haven't talked about how to keep them engaged after getting the message out. It means something different to everyone (individual who lives alone vs a family). Recognizing the wide spectrum of economic vitality and making sure everyone can participate and feel comfortable and safe.

Communication is just one piece of this, and how to get that out. We should start breaking down the other parts and should start compartmentalizing the different pieces; identify what is already there. Need some visuals to start putting the pieces together. Matrix hopefully will help with some of that.

Going back to the Corbett fire, does Gresham have reverse 911? Yes. People don't always have their radio or TVs on; reverse 911 is the one communication that can be very helpful with neighborhoods. It has been utilized to notify people on boiling water notices. Only problem is there are not as many landlines as there were. We can have people register their cellphones, through public alerts. Some people are resistant to registering. There are also many other type of alerts, like flash alerts, so that can make it confusing.

The emphasis is on earthquake, and people don't think that it will happen, so think what the use is. Maybe with all the fires that are going on, especially in the dry season, make an emphasis on fire, and being prepared to evacuate, and be able to tie it in that way. Having to feed on disasters that have happened, fear-based information, would be more effective. Discuss having a public alerts campaign.

For next meeting, brainstorm some of the ideas, like the forms of communication that gets the messages across. What do we think would work. Utility billing go to residents, but not renters. Landlines vs cellphones. What are those communication tools that we are receptive to and are aware of, so we can decide how to best use those methods. The max was talked about; is this an opportunity? Is this one of the messages of communication we can use? Maybe having a standalone website like San Francisco has. What are the communication tools, through schools, other markets?

We also need to convey on why they need to get these alerts. Focus on the messaging, like in different tiers. Focus on how to get the message out, then have different messages from one spectrum to the other. Mapping it out so staff and Council can take that and run with it. We will use flip charts, put them up, so we can have that visual.

Good of the Order

Next meeting Michael will present more about Neighborhood Ready program. Is there something else the group wants or needs? An interest on a presentation of hazard data and risk analysis? Let the chair know if there is interest in anything else to get information available.

Michael will provide information about Neighborhoods, demographic analysis on Neighborhoods, income, topography, block party trailer, etc.

Also, a reminder that the volunteer picnic is on July 10th where we will recognize volunteers and their work.

Next Meeting: ONCE Presentation by Michael Gonzales (Office of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement): July 11, 2018, 6:30pm, Gresham City Hall

Meeting Adjourned 8:20pm.